

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. But it also points out the error made when the Fairness Doctrine was abolished.

The airwaves belong to the people of this country; that has been clearly set forth by numerous court cases. Furthermore, Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest.

I am a senior citizen who values all media: principally radio, TV, and newspaper. I have watched TV and radio deteriorate into a shameless pandering for larger viewing audiences by means of sensationalism and catering to narrow, special interest groups. Most regretfully, I see the media fuel bigotry and divisiveness. Our country has become less civil, more polarized and the media but shoulder much of the blame for this.

The FCC has abandoned its original mandate; it has caved in to politically powerful corporations. It does not have the best interests of the general public in mind when decisions are made. This is indeed a tragedy.

Mark my words: The Sinclair Broadcast will live to regret its decision to preempt regular programming to air a patently political "documentary." Furthermore, the FCC, whose image of late has been tarnished, will become the object of public wrath.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.